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Game Recap: Baseball | 2/26/2016 9:56:00 PM

## Eagle Baseball Tops Highlanders 6-3 to Open Four-Game Series

*Evan Challenger ties a career-high with nine strikeouts*

**STATESBORO, GA.** – Georgia Southern picked up its first home win of the year on Friday night with a briskly paced 6-5 victory over Radford. Returning to the field just 48 hours after a 16-inning marathon game against Georgia Tech, the Eagles needed just 2:18 to tally the win and open the four-game series with the Highlanders. With the win, the Eagles improve to 2-3 while Radford falls to 0-4.

### PLAYER OF THE GAME

**Evan Challenger – LHP – R-Jr. - Mount Dora, Fla.**

7.0 IP // 4 H // 3 R // 2 ER // 1 BB // 9 Ks

Evan Challenger went seven strong innings to pick up his first win of the season on the mound. He matched a career high with nine strikeouts and was economical, needing just 86 pitches to take the strain off a heavily used bullpen from Wednesday's 16-inning

marathon.

## QUOTABLES

### HEAD COACH RODNEY HENNON

"After a tough loss like Wednesday night, the guy you want to run back out there is Challenger. He stepped up for us tonight and gave us seven strong innings. I didn't think he was real sharp right out of the gate, but I thought he settled in and got better as he went. Ryan Fredrick did a nice job finishing off the last two innings."

"We took advantage of some free bases tonight. Our guys did a good job of executing when we had guys on base and did a pretty good job, for the most part, running the bases tonight. We had some better at-bats. With college baseball right now, when you get some freebies like that you have to be able to execute, move guys around and take advantage of it. At that same token, I think we gave up a couple of freebies, but overall it was a solid game."

### STARTING PITCHER EVAN CHALLENGER

"It was definitely good to get a win tonight and get the first win under my belt, and just kind of go from there. Coach called a great game for me and I was able to locate a lot better than I have been in my last start."

## CRUCIAL MOMENTS

**TOP 1ST (RAD 1-0)** – Zach York capitalized on a one-out walk to drive in a run in the opening inning. The RBI was the first of three on the day for the Highlander first baseman.

**BOTTOM 1ST (GS 3-1)** – Following a leadoff strikeout, the Eagles loaded the bases without a hit on a hit batter, throwing error and a walk. [Will Hudgins](#) converted the Eagles' first bases loaded opportunity of the season for a run with a painful RBI as he was hit in the wrist. Later in the inning, [Logan Baldwin](#) plated two more with a single to left. He, however, rounded first too far and was cut down to end the inning.

**BOTTOM 4TH (GS 5-1)** – After Hudgins earned his second painful pass (HBP), a walk and an ill-advised throwing error by the catcher put runners on the corners for Baldwin. A fielder's choice scored Hudgins as Baldwin got aboard with one out. Baldwin reached third on a single by [Kent Rollins](#) and scored when [Evan McDonald](#) dropped a safety squeeze and made it 5-1.

**BOTTOM 5TH (GS 6-1)** – A fielder's choice and single by the heart of the Eagle lineup in the sixth put runners on the corners for Hudgins. The Eagle third baseman placed a sacrifice bunt of his own to score [Jordan Wren](#) from third and extend the lead to 6-1.

**TOP 6TH (GS 6-3)** – Radford cut into the advantage with a pair of runs to open the sixth. A throwing error to start the frame pulled Cleveland off first base and York made the Eagles pay with a no-doubt home run to score two.

**TOP 8TH (GS 6-3)** – [Ryan Frederick](#) came on in the eighth for Challenger and immediately got the first two outs by strikeout. A walk and a single to left put the senior in a spot of bother, but he coolly worked out of the jam with a fly out.

## NOTES

- The Eagles had their five hits scattered across five batters while CJ Brazil and [Will Hudgins](#) were both hit by pitches twice.
- [Logan Baldwin](#) drove in three runs for the Eagles while [Will Hudgins](#) drove in a pair.
- Radford's Zach York went 3-for-4 on the day with all three RBIs.
- [Ryan Frederick](#) picked up his first save of the season on Friday night. It is his first save since taking a six-pitch save on May 22nd against Western Carolina in the SoCon Tournament.
- Friday night was Challenger's 20th collegiate start. Over his career, Challenger went deeper into the game just three times including a career-high 8.0 last season at Troy.

## **NEXT GAME**

Georgia Southern will play a pair on Saturday against Radford with a doubleheader set for 3 p.m. Saturday's first game will be a nine-inning affair while the second will be scheduled for just seven. Tickets can be purchased at the gate while the games will air on the Georgia Southern Sports Network with video streaming at GS All-Access.

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